

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

# AN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh  
na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



**CAVALRY SCOUT  
INF PLN SGT  
NEW HEAD CHAPLAIN**

[STRENGTHEN THE NATION]

[www.dfmagazine.ie](http://www.dfmagazine.ie)



# CONTENTS

## Features:

### 10 Cultural Property Protection

By Jessica Stone



### 12 8th Inf Pln Sgt Cse

By Cpl Shelley Kehoe & Cpl Alan Ferguson

Photos by Armn Sam Gibney

### 16 Introducing the new Head Chaplain

By Pascal Hanrahan, HCF  
Photos By Pascal Hanrahan

### 20 A day in the Glen of Imaal beats school

By Ciarán Mc Nally

### 22 Cavalry Scouts

By Lt Stephen Doyle  
Photos by Lt Stephen Doyle

### 24 Air Corps in aid of the HSE during the pandemic

By Pte (AR) Lukasz Gancarz  
Photos by Pte (AR) Lukasz Gancarz

## Regulars:

### 04 Noticeboard

### 06 On Parade

### 26 From the Archives

### 28 Internal Comms

### 29 Headspace and Timing

### 31 Book Reviews

# 10

Cultural Property Protection



# 12

8th Inf Pln Sgt Cse



# 16

Introducing the new Head Chaplain



# 20

A day in the Glen of Imaal beats school



# 22

Cavalry Scouts

# 24

Air Corps in aid of the HSE during the pandemic

# AN COSANTÓIR

## AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

- Article writing
- Photography
- Interviews
- Social media content creation
- Attend national events



Do you have an interest in journalism/writing and want to pursue your passion. Contact us here at the An Cosantóir magazine to become a content creator and join the team.



# NOTICEBOARD

 Defence Forces Adventure Race

**Date:** Thurs 30 JUN 22      **Race HQ:** Kilbride, Wicklow

**Format:** Self-navigated route. 2-person teams

**Categories:** Male, Female, Mixed, Masters (combined age: 90)

**Disciplines:** Trek/run, kayak, mountain bike

**Time/Distance:** 5-hour cut-off time- Short Course approx 25km, Long Course approx 50km

**Route designed to allow teams of all abilities to complete the race (additional checkpoints for faster teams)**

**Equipment:** Kayaks will be supplied. Competitors must use their own mountain or hybrid bikes

**Road bikes NOT allowed.**

**Timings**

**Registration:** 0900  
**Race Brief:** 0945  
**Race Start:** 1000  
**Race Finish:** 1500

**Entries:** Through ikon from May. Max 30 teams (Closing Date 15 JUN 22)

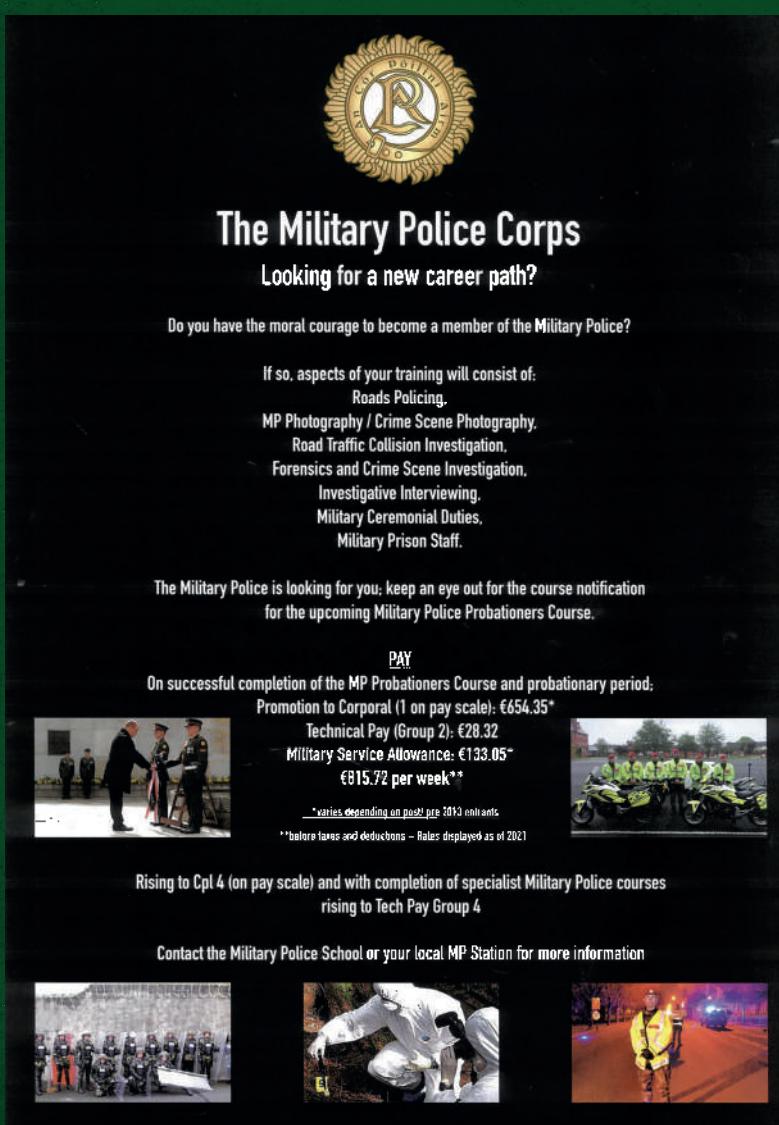
**Logistics:** Accommodation and rations info included on Entry Forms

**More details to follow**

Check out DFAR Page on the DFCAT Group on IKON and Unit PTI for more information

 **DFAR** **DEFENCE FORCES ADVENTURE RACE** **STRENGTHEN THE NATION**



The DF Adventure race will be held on Thursday 30th June 2022. The route is designed for all abilities and will consist of a short course of approx. 25km and a long course of approx.. 50km. This is a great opportunity to get involved in Adventure Racing.

For more information check out the DFAR page on IKON.

# MP Probationers Course Advertisement

## Have an interest in becoming a member of the Military Police?

Policing within the Defence Forces is an important role. The Military Police Corps maintains discipline and investigates offences within the Army, Navy and Air Corps both on and off island.

A MP Probationers course is due to commence in October 2022.

The MP Probationers Course is open to Pte and Cpl ranks (AC and NS equivalent) from all three branches of the Defence Forces.

# EDITORIAL

Hello, and welcome to our third issue of 2022, our 82nd volume of the An Cosantóir magazine. This issue brings us to our third magazine of 2022. We hope you enjoy reading the An Cosantóir magazine and will continue to enjoy it into 2022.

Our Noticeboard page this issue, features a small advertisement on the upcoming MP Probationers course and a notice of the upcoming DF Adventure race.

On Parade features pictures from the 18 IRCON medal parade in Mali, The DF sniper team in Fort Benning, 2 Cav (AR) training camp and the Centenary of the Handover of Collins Barracks.

In our first feature by Jessica Stone, 'Cultural Property Protection (CPP) Training at UNTSI breaks new grounds', Jessica describes the first course in CPP to be run in UNTSI, an international course of 26 participants, including military personnel from Belgium, Germany and the UK.

Moving on to our second feature article, Cpl Shelley Kehoe and Cpl Alan Ferguson give us an insight on the 8th Infantry Platoon Sgts course; A physically demanding course which must be completed in order to be promoted to the rank of Sgt within the Infantry.

In 'Some Say the Devil is dead', we hear from the new head chaplain Pascal Hanrahan, HCF. Pascal guides us through his time in the Irish Guards and tours to Afghanistan, before being commissioned to the DF.

I am creating a pictorial chronology of Women in the Defence Forces to mark 40 years of service. While the book will be predominately a photographic record, I'd also like to include some vignettes and anecdotal records of life in DF. Anybody who would like to be included in the book is strongly encouraged to contact me via [renken91@gmail.com](mailto:renken91@gmail.com). The book will feature the following topics (though this list is not exhaustive): early days following the foundation of the State, the Army Nursing Corps, change in legislation in the late 1970s, first eight cadets, first platoon, first apprentices, second platoon, integrated training from 1994, overseas, sport, family service (siblings, parent/daughter) and present day. I will need and

'A day in the Glen of Imaal beats School' is brought to us by TY student Ciarán McNally. Ciarán tells us about his experience as a TY student in the Defence Forces Press office, along with his visit to the 120th Inf BN MRE in the Glen of Imaal. 'Cavalry Scout' by Lt Stephen Doyle is the first course to be run out of the Cav School in the DFTC. This course has been in the making for a number of years, and is due to replace the basic recce course.

'Dublin in Flames 1922' by Paul O'Brien MA, is our "From the Archives" piece. Their article from Volume 72, Issue 05, of June 2012 looks back at the Irish Civil War, a very interesting read for our historian readers.

As always, we have our regular features including PSS continuing to provide vital mental health advice in 'Headspace and Timing' as well as our 'Internal Comms' piece for all the serving soldiers who read the magazine, and not forgetting our book reviews on page 31.

*"Power isn't control at all, power is strength, and giving that strength to others. A leader isn't someone who forces others to make him stronger; a leader is someone willing to give strength to others that they may have the strength to stand their own" – Beth Revis*

*Sgt Louise McDonald – Editor*

would greatly appreciate members of the first two platoons from 1981 and 1990 to get in touch to educate me on their experiences, as having joined in 94 myself, I am somewhat familiar with life in DF since then! I would also like access to photos from those early days if people can share with me and I will conduct interviews with volunteers who are keen to be featured. This will be a publication that we can all take pride in and be a part of, so I really would urge people to get in touch. My publication date is aimed at mid-summer and by then, hopefully we can hold an event to celebrate 40 years without Covid-19 spoiling play. Thanks in advance.

*Sgt Rena Kennedy*



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## FRONT COVER

Provided by Cpl Lee Coyle  
Cavalry Scout Course  
pictured Tpr Jason Murphy  
& Tpr Connor Lewis

# ON PARADE

Photos of 18 IRCON Medal Parade held in OP-Tango in Koulikoro Training Camp. The Medals were presented by Austrian OF-5, Colonel Klaus SCHADENBAUER, commander of the Education and Training Task Force (ETTF). Austria, like Ireland, Finland and Sweden are part of the four EU nations in the mission who are "not-military aligned". In total, 22 EU and 3 Non-EU nations are part of 25 nation strong European Union Training Mission in Mali. The Irish troops in the mission contribute mainly as Officer and NCO trainers to FAM (Forces Armees Maliennes), providing logistics support (S4) and Signals (S6) support to the trainers as part of the ETTF headquarters and also are responsible in the Mission Force Headquarters for Logistics (J4) and Personnel (J1).





Photos of The Defence Forces Sniper team in action at the US Army International Sniper Competition in Fort Benning, Georgia.  
Photos taken by Glass Image Photos



Photos of 2 Cav Army Reserve Training Camp  
These photos can be accessed through the Defence Forces Flickr page or from this link:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine/albums/72177720299183938>  
Photos taken by Airman Sam Gibney



Photos of Centenary of the Handover of Collins Barracks  
These photos can be accessed through the Defence Forces Flickr page or from this link:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine/albums/72177720299052951>  
Photos taken by Airman Sam Gibney

# CULTURAL PROPERTY PROTECTION TRAINING AT UNTSI BREAKS NEW GROUND

By Jessica Stone



CPP Training preparing the brief for the Force Commander.

The first Cultural Property Protection (CPP) training course at the United Nations Training School Ireland (UNTSI) took place in the Curragh from the 14th - 17th February 2022. Its aim, as outlined in the Course Mission, was to give participants an 'awareness of the responsibilities, obligations, and opportunities at home and on overseas deployments, regarding cultural property protection (CPP), the trade in illicit cultural property (CP) and their relevance and potential impact on peace-keeping mission success.'

The 26 course participants included commissioned officers, members of enlisted ranks and eight international military personnel from Belgium, Germany, and the UK alongside the personnel from Ireland. The training was conducted by Professor Peter Stone, UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection (CPP) and Peace at Newcastle University in the UK, and President of Blue Shield International (BSI), together with Major Robert Friel from the British Army's CPP unit.

Objectives of the four-day training included enhancing participants knowledge of the legal instruments relating to CPP under International humanitarian law, in particular, the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999), and the 1970 UN Convention on Prohibiting and Preventing the illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Other topics included CPP within Customary International Law, Human Rights Law, CPP-related UN Treaties and Security Council Resolutions and International Criminal Law.

Of particular interest for the participants were Major Friel's and Col. Scott Dejesse of the USA Army's presen-



Professor Peter Stone presenting CPP.

tations on developing a CPP capability within the Armed Forces. UNIFIL's cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the Lebanese national authorities, heritage NGO Biladi, and the Lebanese Blue Shield, during the emergency response to the August 2020 explosion in the Beirut Port was explained by Col Youssef Haider of LAF and UNIFIL's CIMIC officer, Svetlana Jovic. This cooperation highlighted the important nexus between the military and the humanitarian and heritage sectors during conflict or following natural or human-made disasters, and was emphasised again during Professor Stone's presentation on the work of BSI, and its CPP agreements with NATO, UNIFIL and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on CPP training and advocacy.

Whereas the destruction of cultural property can be used as a weapon of war, conversely, the protection of sacred sites and monuments during military deployments or peacekeeping operations can be a 'force multiplier' and lead to mission success by gaining the trust of host nations and local communities for whom their cultural heritage is an intrinsic part of identity and belonging. "Until now," remarked one participant, "if I were tasked to destroy an IED in a historic building, I'd blow the whole place up. Now I'd think about it differently."

A tour of the Curragh Military Museum on the first afternoon, and a recce for a disaster preparedness plan, placed the morning's discussions into a practical context, giving the group food for thought for the third day's field exercise.

This took place on Wednesday the 16th February in Dublin, with a fictitious Peacekeeping deployment to 'Wilfland'



CPP Training visit to the Curragh Military Museum.  
Maj. Friel briefing the group



CPP Training participants visit the Curragh Military Museum.

to prepare for and deliver safe and secure elections during a time of rising tension between the region's multi-ethnic communities, and a potential spillover into outright conflict. Given the risk of looting or attack on the different communities' cultural property and the weaponisation of heritage sites by combatants, a second element of the deployment was to provide support to the national authorities for the protection of a park surrounded by historic buildings housing government ministries, St Wilfred's Roman Catholic cathedral, and Wilfland's National Archives. The group was tasked with preparing a CPP brief for the Force Commander back at UNTSI the following day.

As often happens in conflict or disaster situations, some of the expectations of Wilfland's 'local authorities', 'law enforcement officers' and 'heritage experts' during the role-play exercises, differed from, and went beyond the Peacekeepers' mandate. This caused some animated debates and not a little diplomacy to find common ground for actionable tasks to be included in the recommendations to the Force Commander that would not compromise the Mission, whilst reassuring worried

authorities and heritage experts that they could count on the Peacekeepers' support.

The roleplay highlighted a range of threats that could arise to CP in theatre where Peacekeepers are deployed, and the different solutions that could be found to ensure the safety of heritage sites, historic monuments, and cultural artefacts. The importance of CPP as a means of gaining trust rather than alienating local communities, was an important take away from the field day. Pte O'Keefe, a veteran of many Peacekeeping deployments, and keeper of the military museum in Kilkenny, summed it up when he said: "I can see how CPP has not just one, but many different angles. It has made me curious to know more."

For Professor Stone, this first UNTSI course on CPP was the very welcome culmination of a journey that started in 2013, when two members of UNIFIL joined a CPP training, being run for LAF. "This course has been, we hope, the first of an annual event at UNTSI," Professor Stone remarked during his summing up. "We also hope other UN Schools will develop similar courses" (a comment on the first day of this training was:) 'why has no-one told us about this before' neatly encapsulates the need."



1st International Cultural Property Protection Course  
United Nations Training School Ireland  
14th – 18th February 2022.

Class Photograph



CPP Training participants being briefed by Maj. Robert Friel and Prof. Peter Stone during a visit to the Curragh Military Museum.



# 8TH INFANTRY PLATOON SERGEANTS COURSE

By Cpl Shelley Kehoe & Cpl Alan Ferguson  
Photos by Armn Sam Gibney

For many people, promotion within the Defence Forces, will be seen as a natural and necessary step in their career progression. This article written by Cpl Shelley Kehoe (J1, DFHQ) and Cpl Alan Ferguson (27th Inf Bn), outlines just what's involved for those wishing to progress their career in the Infantry as they recount their experiences from the 8th Infantry Platoon Sergeants Course.

The course commenced on the morning of 17th January 2022 and concluded on the 09th of March 2022. Made up of thirty-one males and 2 females, we came from Infantry units all over the country. The course was 7.5 weeks in total with four major assessments throughout. There were four Combat Fitness Assessments or CFAs grouped together as one, as each had to be passed in order to continue; a command test appointment, ongoing evaluation and a written general test. Thirty-three students successfully passed the course.

Individual student preparation for this, included getting equipment such as comms, body armour and NVE from the home unit to the NCO Training Wing (NCOTW), physically preparing for the four CFAs, revision of map reading and navigation and revision of infantry platoon and section tactics, roles etc.

Below is a brief outline of what is covered on the course:

## Week 1

CFA 1–3.2 km combat run with 16 kg to be completed in under 20 minutes.

Log runs

Display/revision stands which included weapons/ammunition/comms/NVE

Lectures on the characteristics of light Infantry and the Organisation of an Infantry Battalion

Principles of Offence

TLPP, the 7 Question Estimate, OpOrds & Annexes

Offensive Operations at Bn and Coy Level

CSS at Bn & Coy level

Retrograde operations & the conduct of Withdrawal operations

Area Defence Bn Level

IWW Stands on Support Weapons HMG, 81 Mortar,

Javelin Anti-Armour, Sniper  
Coy Deliberate Attack by day & night

## Week 2

CFA 2 – 8km Combat Run with 16kg to be completed in under 62 minutes

Battle PTs

CFA3- Tactical Simulation Test, 25m Leopard crawl, 25m dummy drag (70kg males/50kgs females), 25m double jerry can carry.

CASEVAC Stretcher Run

FIBUA/MOUT Fundamentals and characteristics

Deliberate Bn Attack in FIBUA/MOUT

DIBUA Organisation and planning

Role of Platoon Sgt & CS in FIBUA/MOUT & DIBUA

Practical FIBUA/MOUT drills in MTF

The Manoeuvirst Approach, All Arms Concept and Effects Based Operations lectures

Offensive TEWT-FIBUA/MOUT CSS

Night Navigation in the Curragh area

Recce Platoon Role & Responsibilities including Sniper assets

Infantry CBRN tactics, TTPs, rehearsals

Indirect Fire Planning, Target Grid Procedures - Artillery School

TEWT Debrief

CASEVAC procedures including casualty treatment and processing and role of Pln Sgt

## Week 3

CFA 4- 12.8km loaded march with 18kg to be completed in under 2 hours 1 minute

FIWAF

Offensive TWET

Mid-Course Interviews

Ambush lectures including demonstration and rehearsals

Patrol Harbours, roles of sentries including demonstration and rehearsals

Revision on Recce Patrols and Patrol Reports

Fighting Patrols and Raids

TEWT Debrief

Platoon Attack revision including Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drills

General Test

Preparation for Field Training Exercise (FTX) Urban Warrior- stores, weapons, ammunition, equipment, orders preparation and delivery

**My experience from the course (Cpl Shelly Kehoe):**

The first few weeks consisted of the course forming together as a group because it was made up of



Cpl Shelley Kehoe, student on the 8th Inf Pln Sgts cse

a number of different AASC. It was very physically demanding with the four CFAs being completed as well as additional battle PT sessions in between. It was also mentally demanding due to a lot of time spent away from home if not living locally, and a lot of work being done in the evenings as preparation for the following day or week, known as OPT or Outside Programme Time work. This involved working late into the evenings most nights, working on TEWTs or preparing orders for the following week's exercises.

However, as a course we gelled very well together and kept each other's spirits high. In terms of morale (and I was crowned "Morale Queen" while on FTX Immediate Action in the Galtee Mountains in horrendous weather conditions), I was also very pleased to be nominated Class Vice President by the NCOTW Staff; my job was made very easy by the hard work of the students and the Class President.

This experience for me, as a whole, has been very enjoyable and challenging but also very rewarding for the sense of achievement in completing the 7.5 gruelling weeks and now being eligible for promotion to the rank of Sergeant in the Infantry, as well as making a lot of new friends from all Infantry units across the DF.

All lectures, PTs, rehearsals, demonstrations and even the CFAs covered within the first three weeks, are geared towards preparing the infantry soldier for what was to come on the four exercise phases beginning in Week Four.

## Week 4

### FTX Urban Warrior.

A FIBUA/MOUT exercise conducted in Fort Davis, Co. Cork. This exercise revised everyone in personal/section/platoon administration and associated TTPs i.e. CASEVAC, ORBATTs, AMMO/CAS states, use of TAMs, various reports, radio usage and voice procedure. Also utilised on this exercise

was an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) or drone, operated by a team from 1 BAR which provided the various platoon commanders with real time footage of enemy activity and movements, and offered commanders the information needed to formulate his/her plan or amend it as needed. This cooperation really exemplified the Infantry Principle of collaborating with supporting Arms and is a step in the right direction for the DF in terms of integrating modern, cutting-edge technology with Infantry soldiers on the ground.

## Week 5

### FTX Immediate Action

Arguably the most physically and mentally demanding phase on the course, this patrolling exercise in the Galtee Mountains, Co. Tipperary was made all the more challenging due to the severe winds and prolonged rain as Storm Eunice battered the country. Over the course of 72-96 hours, we covered approximately 40km by day and night setting up patrol harbours, conducting ambushes, raids, FIWAF, resupply patrols and direct-action attacks. On this exercise we teamed up with the 12th Recce Commander's Course being conducted by the Infantry Weapons Wing. The Recce Commanders and their troops were then tasked by us to conduct route recce's, information gathering recce patrols and select suitable Patrol Harbour locations, ambush sites and FRVs. Again, this was a realistic and welcome example of cooperation and teamwork between units or supporting assets. This exercise culminated in a raid on an isolated hostel which was subjected to heavy pre H-hour fire by several GPMGs and a coordinated clearance by assaulting friendly forces, quickly followed by a CASEVAC removal exercise, as the hostel was expected to come under enemy indirect defensive fire.

It was teamwork, camaraderie, loyalty to each other and determination that got everyone through this exercise and we learned that when the situation gets difficult, it's those people around you that helps you through.

## Week 6

### FTX Stand Alone

This week, we moved location to the Glen of Imaal where we would be tested in our major command appointment as either Platoon Sgt or Platoon Commander in Company level attacks conducted in various locations around the Glen of Imaal training area. Monday morning began with meeting 'our' exercise troops for the week on McDonagh Square DFTC. Those students in appointment had their work cut out; organising, processing and administering their platoons and was a good experience in dealing with large numbers of personnel

and equipment.

This year it was decided to implement Coy level attacks to see if the testing process could still be used effectively, and it was! Personnel in appointment were tested under appropriate conditions as Platoon Sgt or Platoon Commander, and everyone involved from riflemen to section commanders and higher, got to see the mechanics of Company level actions play out in front of them as multiple enemy positions were suppressed by one platoon, while assaulted by another and the reserve platoons ably dealt with friendly casualties and the Coy CSS chain was put to good effect. Captured Persons or CPERS were processed and sent back to the CS as were casualties to waiting Gator All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). This aspect of utilising all available assets, such as Gator ATVs with dismounted Infantry soldiers, highlighted the need for us, as an organisation, to continuously evolve and improve our basic TTPs to efficiently administer frontline troops.

## Week 7

### FTX Fight Back

Throughout the course and its exercises, we had been dealing with the Hibernian Liberation Front (HLF), a fictional Opposition Force (OPFOR) created by NCOTW staff to provide an enemy for its courses. This was the common thread and we were successful in removing their presence and subsequent threat from Fort Davis, the Galtee Mountains and the Glen of Imaal, but we weren't to have it all our own way, hence the title "Fight Back".

This FTX was a planned, deliberate company sized staged withdrawal operation, from fortified defensive positions on Carrickashane Mountain in Aghavanna, Co. Wicklow, as HLF sections, accompanied by APCs, moved to retake the mountain.

Again, we were given exercise troops and the various Platoon Commanders and Sgts detailed in their orders and rehearsals, how their positions would be strengthened with log obstacles, barbed wire, trip flares and anything else which would slow down the enemy advance and allow each platoon time to execute an orderly withdrawal to predesignated APC pick up points. A forward OP, positioned on high ground, gave the platoons early warning of the approaching HLF and the platoons stood to. A fierce defence and withdrawal was conducted and this retrograde operation went according to plan and the HLF now occupied Carrickashane Mountain. Maybe the next Infantry Platoon Sergeant's Course will encounter the HLF and use any number of effects-based verbs to effectively neutralise them.



Cpl Alan Ferguson student on the 8th Inf Pln Sgts cse

### My experience from the course (Cpl Alan Ferguson):

After I completed my All-Arms Standard Course (AASC) in early 2021, I had to wait for another ten months to undergo the Infantry Platoon Sgts Course. It was always in the back of your mind that it had to be done, there were some students, who for one reason or another, had to wait years, all the while, knowing that one of the hardest courses in the Defence Forces was hanging over their heads.

However, once it begins, you quickly get stuck in. As mentioned, we got on very well as a class and that made the challenging nature of this course easier to deal with. Everyone helped each other in whatever way they could, everyone worked hard for each other when in appointment, nobody wanted to jeopardise their fellow student's test. We checked things among each other, ran ideas and problems past each other and sought out each other's advice and expertise when needed or if you were unsure and needed a helping hand. I found this to be the most rewarding aspect of the course, that we have good people in our ranks who will make excellent Infantry Platoon Sgts, and that can only be good for the Defence Forces.



Student's creating a model of the terrain in preparation of Orders



Student completing CFA-3, The tactical Simulation test with a 50kg Dummy



Students approaching the finish line during CFA 2 – 8km Combat run



Students conducting an insertion walk in the Galtee Mountains



Students carrying out a casualty extraction during a Platoon and attack

# SOME SAY THE DEVIL IS DEAD..... INTRODUCING THE NEW HEAD CHAPLAIN

Article and Photos By Paschal Hanrahan, HCF

Those words appeared in a very warm and generous letter from Bishop Willie Walsh, releasing me from parish duties in West Clare and allowing me to answer my calling and desire to serve as an Army Chaplain with the Royal Army Chaplains Department (RACChD) and the RC Bishopric of the Forces. Bishop Willie knew of my interest in all things military and had previously supported my desire to minister as a chaplain, unfortunately no vacancies existed in the DF Chaplaincy Service at that time. The letter was penned in July 2005 and now, almost 17 years later, and with a profound sense of humility, I have taken on the role of Head Chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces. But let's return to the beginning and those early days!

## Initial Training

Notwithstanding my time with the FCA in my native Ennis, it required no less than 12 weeks of intensive training at both the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre, Ampthill House (Hampshire) and at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in Surrey to turn this West Clare curate into something approaching a commissioned Army Chaplain.



St. Patrick's day in Afghanistan

Colour Sergeant Cronin (now Major Cronin), an Irish Guards soldier on the Directing Staff, made a point of not showing any favouritism to his fellow Irishman. I can still hear him shouting at me – your other left padre!! I did get my own back some years later during an International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes when I heard his voice in the confessional!!

There were four other chaplains in my intake; an English Baptist, a Northern Irish Methodist, a Northern Irish Presbyterian, and a Free Church of Scotland minister! There has got to be a joke in there somewhere!! I have to say one of the greatest blessings I have experienced over the years has been the friendships forged with both the denominational and multi faith colleagues that I have been privileged to work with. There is a unity and a strength in diversity, and I have seen this in all aspects of military life.

## Queen's Royal Lancers to the Irish Guards

My first assignment was with a recce unit the Queen's Royal Lancers, they were preparing for a tour of Iraq when I arrived. Training was arduous with many months of pre-deployment training overseas and away from families, and as I soon learned, dangerous. We lost one member of our Battle-group before we even got to Iraq.

Nothing could have prepared me for the horrors of my first operational tour. I kept a journal, a habit from my days in Maynooth and one that I commend to you, for it is always good to try and articulate your thoughts and experiences to help process them. Looking through those pages today, I am amazed this naïve young chaplain survived. I can still hear the sounds and the



Commissioning Day RMAS

smells as I think back on a tour that saw the most kinetic levels of activity of any of the Iraq tours. We lost 33 men and women over that tour and hundreds more went home with life changing injuries.

Out on the Patrols, the men and women were facing an increased threat of Improvised Explosive Devices while those back at the Contingent Operating Base were continuously under the threat of Indirect Fire.

Why are we here Padre, they would ask, a question that underlined their hope that somehow their presence in that country was making a difference? It was Vaclav Havel who said: "hope is not that everything will turn out alright but that regardless of how things turn out they will make sense."

War diminishes our humanity, it dehumanises us. That's why we have, by and large, trained to kill, it goes against our human nature. War exposes us to some of the worst of what humanity is capable of and I was struck by the number of times members of the Armed Forces have said to me "Padre, I wish I was the person I was before I deployed!" That's why I believe that while nations may be good at preparing for war (Jus ad Bellum), may even be good at prosecuting war (Jus in Bello), we are invariably poor at ending wars (Jus post Bellum).

No one from overseas deployment ever tells the full story. I learned that we build on the little success of those that went before

us and indeed sow the seeds of future success for those that come after us. Shortly after my return in May 2007 I was assigned to the 1st Battalion the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment (1PWRR), an infantry Battalion based in Paderborn in Germany. They too were preparing to deploy on what was to be the final combat tour to Iraq.

It was incredible to see the changes since my previous tour. Suddenly there were different sounds, bustling markets and children at play. No doubt there was still an obvious threat and one had to be vigilant, but we were beginning to see the semblance of a return to normal life for the Iraqi people. As we prepared to handover the Combat Mission to the US and leave Iraq, I suggested that we hold a memorial service where we would remember by name, every service person who died during Operation Telic, as the Iraq tours were known. It was important that we did so not just for ourselves but for the families as well.

On my return to Germany, I was assigned to 7&16 Signal Regiments, who were based at Elmpt Station on the German-Dutch Border. They were busy units, who were rotating squadrons through Afghanistan. While I did not get to deploy with them, I learned about the importance of supporting the families and the rear operations group as they strived to manage everyday life. My appreciation of the sacrifice families make in support of their loved ones, grew!

From Elmpt I moved four hours east to Bergen-Hohne where I served with the Artillery,



EX WARFIGHTER



Accompanying Troops in Iraq

a busy unit again rotating Batteries through Afghanistan and conducting training in Kenya. While based here I also had the opportunity to participate in an exchange program, Ex LONGLOOK, where I spent four months in Australia with the ADF, deploying on Ex with them, celebrating ANZAC Day and getting to grips with Aussie Rules.

However, there is always payback for these wonderful experiences, I was no sooner back from Australia when I was informed that I was being posted back to the UK and to the Irish Guards, who were preparing to deploy to Afghanistan. It's always a little nerve racking, turning up at a new unit and I remember vividly arriving at the gate of Mons Barracks in Aldershot where the Irish Guards were based. The young lad at the gate looked at me and said "Fr do you not recognise me?" Help me out I said! "You gave me my First Holy Communion back in Kilrush!" A small world, Ian was one of the many fellow countrymen and women I would meet over the years of service, either on tour or exercises and it was always a joy.

Following those first five Unit assignments, I was selected for my first Brigade Job where as well as mentoring the unit chaplains across the Brigade, I was to provide pastoral support and moral guidance to the Brigade Commander and his Staff.

This was a steep learning curve for me, I had up until this point avoided all HQs like the plague. That was the place you only

went to if you were in trouble and there was the myth that Brigade HQs exist in order to make units lives hell! I discovered that this was a fallacy and the men and women in the various HQs that I have served, have been some of the most hardworking I have ever come across, striving to protect units and their forecast of events etc.

Not having any real staff experience prior to this, I was selected to attend the Intermediate Command Staff Course at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham. Whilst I may have struggled with much of the syllabus, I could not help but be padre to the young newly promoted majors on the course, all of whom found the going tough at some point or another. No, I might not be the first choice for Operations Officer or indeed plan any Offensive actions, but when the chips were down, I was there with a word of encouragement and a listening ear. Other highlights of the course included a two-week stint at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas and a Battlefield Study to Normandy.

Following Staff College, payback came in the form of being appointed Staff Chaplain at Army HQ and official MA to the Chaplain General. It was a very busy and fulfilling time. We had centenary commemorations marking the end of WW1, Normandy 75, but also challenges in and around the future of the Chaplains' Department and what it



Pascal delivers Mass in Iraq



New HCF Pascal Hanrahan

might look like, developing our role in support of mental health and wellbeing and the introduction of Character Development Sessions.

Escaping Army HQ, I next found myself doing two regional jobs, 4th Infantry Brigade and HQ Northeast based in Catterick and 7th Infantry Brigade and HQ East based in Rutland. These were dual role posts, in that you had a deployable Brigade to look after and Firm Base regions which looked after things like flood response and Military Activities, in support of Civic Authorities. It was interesting stuff and really taught me so much about the relationship between the military and the wider population and the importance of supporting Veteran agencies and charities and the challenges that military personnel face as they transition to civvy street.

In July 2020 I was selected for promotion to CF1 and to the General Staff and assigned as Assistant Chaplain General to the 3rd (UK) Division and concurrently Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain to the Army. I wondered if I was still me and thankfully, I was! Rank, medals or decorations never really bothered me, they are not important. All I have ever wanted was to be the best that I can be, so that I might best serve the men and women of whom I have been called to serve. One of the highlights of the past year has been a deployment to Fort Hood in Texas for a Corp level Exercise and an opportunity to meet up with some American colleagues.

My bags are now un-packed, and the time has come almost full circle. It is with a profound sense of gratitude and a feeling of blessedness that I approach the next phase of my life and ministry. I am humbled to be succeeding Fr Seamus Madigan in the role of the Head Chaplain to the Forces. I know I have much to learn but I promise you I will give it my all.

More say he rose again, more say he rose again.....and joined Oglaih na hEireann!!



My Commissioning Day 2005

# A DAY IN THE GLEN OF IMAAL BEATS SCHOOL

By Ciarán McNally – TY Student

Throughout the last week of March, I was on Work Experience as a TY student in the Defence Forces Press Office in Newbridge. On the 29th March, which happened to be only my second day on the placement, I was given the amazing opportunity of visiting the Glen of Imaal with Captain Ruairí Millane to observe and shadow Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) with the 120th Inf Bn on their Mission Readiness Exercise (MRE) before they depart for Lebanon in May. We were also accompanied by two of the Irish correspondents from Sky News as they wanted to capture some footage of the exercise. As the closest I have ever come to LFTT was paintball, I jumped at the opportunity to see real soldiers of the Defence Forces in action.

According to the briefing note, the 120th Inf Bn is made up of three-hundred and forty-seven (347) personnel, nine of whom were members of the Armed Forces of Malta.

A large portion of the group will be traveling overseas for the first time, one-hundred and four (104) to be exact. The 120th Inf Bn is made up of personnel from 26 different counties across Ireland, with Dublin, Louth and Kildare contributing most to the population of the group. They are commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Denis Hanley, who has served in the DF for 32 years. The ages of the personnel in the group varies



Member of the 120th Inf Bn UNIFIL providing flank security



Pre fire preparation



Loading the .5

quite a bit, with the youngest member being 19 to the oldest at 58.

We first reported to Coolmoney Camp where I met and chatted to some members of the 120 Bn. We then moved to the main exercise area centred on Cemetery Hill where Sky News interviewed some of the soldiers of the unit. During this time, I was brought up to the observation tower by Capt Dermot Hoey and the Comdt Murt Brennan to get an overview of where the exercise would take place and what the objective would be. This is where I assumed I would be observing the exercise from, a warm mug of tea



Bn Comdr Lt Col Denis Hanly, 120th Inf Bn UNIFIL

in hand. However, it wasn't until they laid out body armour, helmets and hearing protection, that I realised what it really meant to be shadowing a live firing exercise.

Capt Hoey explained that the purpose of the exercise was to simulate a scenario in which two wounded peacekeepers were stranded on a road and they needed to be extracted under fire. The sections we followed were tasked with rescuing the peacekeepers and they were to achieve this by manoeuvring down the left flank of a ditch while firing at targets that popped up, as suppressing fire was laid down from a distance. It was a shock at first when the shots first began, despite the ear protectors I could feel the repeated thud of the guns in my chest.

We shadowed two groups, the first we followed at a distance, so the Sky News team got some general wide angle shots while I watched at the side in astonishment at the General-Purpose-Machine-Gun laying down suppressing fire as the rest of the section made their way further down the hill. After this part of the exercise, Capt Millane decided that we would follow the next section more closely in order to get better action shots for Sky News. This meant that we were right behind the troops as they sought cover, fired their rifles and manoeuvred for their final assault.

When we finished shadowing the sections, we were driven over to the Mowag Armoured Vehicle live firing range where I was briefed on the weapons used on the vehicles. When we arrived on the range, there was a buzz of activity as they were making final preparations for the shoot. I witnessed the loading of the guns, soldiers on top of the vehicles hulking bullets which seemed the size of my forearm, strung together into the ammunition tracks on the turret with a fluidity that could only have been achieved through rigorous training. It was exactly what I pictured professional soldiers preparing for an exercise would look like, before driving off and leaving a cloud of dust behind. The troops were so concentrated on their task that they barely acknowledged our presence, which speaks of how seriously they took the exercise. I was given a quick tour inside the Mowag by one of the officers. I was also told that the vehicles' designs were extremely practical aside but would benefit from a better air conditioning system, which was only truly appreciated after a six-hour patrol under the Lebanese sun.

While we weren't allowed follow the Mowags past a certain point it still didn't dull the impressiveness of the guns as they fired at targets more than a kilometre away from us, before throwing up smoke, so as to mask their departure. For me it was like something out of a movie or a video game.

While most of my other work experience placements could be described as, "interesting" or "Educational" there is only one word that can describe my day at the Glen of Imaal; "Exciting". Compared to the office-based or even bedroom-based virtual placements, this week has been a refreshing break from sitting behind screens, as I was given the opportunity to experience at first hand and in real life, the efficiency and professionalism of military training.



Live Fire section attack

# CAVALRY SCOUTS

Article & Photos by Lt Stephen Doyle,  
Cavalry School



Scouts conducting Reconnaissance Operations

*The Cavalry Corp will provide Armoured Reconnaissance, Mounted Direct Fire Support, and Surveillance Capabilities, in order to deliver Force Protection and Situational Awareness for the Defence Forces in both conventional and Peace Support Operations.*

## Introduction

Tales of scouts on horseback date back to the Gupta Dynasty of Ancient India (circa 400 CE). Cavalry horsemen and Scouts would prove invaluable in battles until the early 20th Century, when the vulnerability of horses to modern machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire reduced their utility on the battlefield. After the First World War, Cavalry units were mostly converted from horses to either armoured car or tank units. These became known as mechanised Cavalry and used to enable manoeuvre through for example, break-through of enemy defences, exploitation or to fulfil a reconnaissance role, thus bringing about the advent of "Multi-Purpose Cavalry".

As societies and technology advanced, warfare transitioned from attrition to manoeuvre. Militaries developed tactics to gain information on their adversaries, and strike in depth at their centre of gravity or at lines of logistics, whilst minimising the risk to their own force. The need emerged for highly mobile and protected information gatherers who could work with minimal logistical support ahead of the main force and report on enemy movements, allowing commanders to take advantage of time and space.



Scouts conducting Reconnaissance Operations

In the post 9/11 world, military technologies have taken yet another leap forward, debunking many of the Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP's) of the past. We only need look to the current conflict in Eastern Europe to see how rudimentary "off the shelf" drones are providing almost instant sensor to shooter information.

Technology is fast replacing the operations once carried out by boots on the ground. "Manned" Close Target Reconnaissance (CTR) for example, will conceivably become an alien concept outside of the SOF domain due to the rapid advances in unmanned technology.

Timely and Accurate Information gathering from distance is now key; high powered Thermal Optics, Ground Radars, Unmanned Ground Vehicles (UGV), and Drones, now provide a large swath of the Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) sphere. With this in mind, Equipment capabilities being researched for the Cavalry Corps concept of employment, includes Tethered and Close Combat Drones, Unmanned Ground Vehicles, and Light Armoured Vehicles specifically designed for Reconnaissance tasks.

Furthermore, as cavalry is much more than reconnaissance, mounted direct fire capability integration enables greater effects and capability when acting on the information that has been gathered.

The 'human-in-the-loop' (Scout) needs the ability to employ this technology coupled with a high level of soldiering skills, in order to provide close to real time information, to contribute to Information Fusion, to collaborate with other Arms, thus assisting with the Commanders Decision Making Process. This need, when aligned with international practice, led to the development of the Cavalry School's 'Scout Concept'. The team (Comdt Tynan, Comdt Carrigy, Capt Kirby, Lt Doyle, RSM Caffrey, Sgt Havens & Cpl Phelan) refined the concept over 16 months to produce the first draft syllabi submitted to the Df Academic Council.

The Scouts' relationship with their vehicles must be one of mutual support; they augment the vehicles capabilities and offset its limitations. They do this by deploying covertly, utilising sensors and optics to gain information, and transferring real-time data via in-service communications systems, back to their vehicles. This capability is essential to a commander across the full spectrum of conflict.

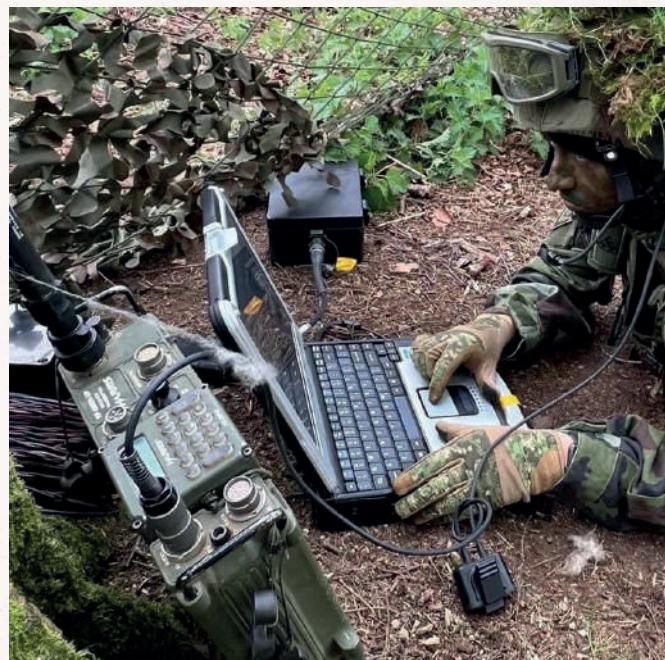
Understanding the commander's intent and decentralising the execution of a plan was never more applicable than in today's 3-dimensional battlespace, where units will need to be dispersed and reduce their communication emissions. The Scout's function is to answer the commander's information requirements, confirm or deny their assumptions and therefore assist in COA development. We endeavour to empower our Junior Leaders and Scouts to make decisions in a change intensive environment, whilst always respecting the latest time the information is of value (LTIOV).

Cavalry Scouts endeavour to organise, train and equip to fulfil this multidimensional role.

## The 8-week Scout Course is as follows.

### Optics and Sensors

The Cavalry Scout Optics and Sensor course provides students with a refresher on current optical sensors (LUCIE, SOPHIE, MONO) and qualifies students as operators on the FLIR Recon Thermal Binoculars, which provides a Surveillance and Target Acquisition capability by day or night >10Km. Students also receive training on the Elbit FOXTRACK Ground



Students performing Data Transmission via HF Platform



Student establishing a Hasty Op, deploying GSR and Calling for Fire, aided by FLIR Recon Target Acquisition System



Student undergoing Map Stand Assessment during the Navigation Course

Surveillance Radar which delivers instantaneous detection and real-time tracking of targets to 24km by day or night. This allows other assets to be tasked to conduct further recognition and identification of targets. These Sensors and optics give the Cavalry Scout Troop a capability that is as applicable to a Peace Support Operation as it is to Conventional Operations. The Optics and Sensors course culminates in a practical assessment in the assembly, deployment, and integration of all sensors.

#### **Navigation**

The Cavalry Scout Navigation course develops students in land navigation on various types of terrain, by day and night. It also incorporates Map Stand Test, Route Card Test and GPS training. The Cavalry School has worked to develop a Target Navigation mind-set.

This required a mind-set shift in terms of how we were delivering this training and an overhaul of the test procedure. Testing is now conducted in an environment that is more applicable to an actual Scout operation. Students must understand how to stealthily navigate terrain.

The learning environment focuses on instructor contact time and student understanding of bearings & pacing. More responsibility is given to students for their route selection and production of route cards.

GPS Spot trackers enable exercise control to monitor students' progress. Beginning at dusk, this test is designed to mimic a patrol of 12km (4hr patrol) across mountainous terrain. It is critical that students are confident navigators before understanding its applicability in tactical tasks. Students are encouraged not to rush; emphasis is placed on following their chosen route and arriving at their target in a condition to conduct assigned tactical tasks. A final exercise introduces tactical patrolling once navigation knowledge has been confirmed.

Feedback from the students of the first Cavalry Scout Navigation course has been extremely positive.

#### **Communication**

The Cavalry Scout Communication Course develops students' prior knowledge of VHF SINCGAR and PRR, and then progresses to HF data transmission. In keeping in the LTIOV mind-set, the evaluation for this module sees students establish hasty Observation Posts (OP's), deploy the FOXTRACK GSR and FLIR, and transfer close to real-time data via HF. Although the need for detailed debriefing of assets will remain, close to real-time information is invaluable.

Communication hardware and software will inevitably change. However, today's soldiers are extremely tech-minded and tech-enabled, and once the process of data transmission is learned, the means or system of transfer can easily be changed or developed.

#### **Cavalry Scout Tactical Course**

The cavalry Scout Tactical Course develops basic soldiering skills and provides students with a comprehensive knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of a Scout. It focuses on attaining high standards in weapons handling, the ability to react to contact and dismounted patrolling drills. Combat tracking training contained in this course heightens the student's awareness of Ground Sign, both their own and that of others. Students are also trained in Call for Fire with instructor support from the Artillery School. This coupled with the FLIR Target Acquisition system makes Scouts formidable in acquiring targets and sharing in a networked battlefield management system. Realistic and dynamic exercises during this module, evaluate students' ability to identify the optimal method to conduct their tasks and offers Scouts the autonomy to decide on the type of sensor and tactics needed to contribute to the ISTAR process.

In this challenging tactical phase, students learn to understand the mission and the commander's intent. They must work to fulfil all aspects of the Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR's). They learn to reduce information transfer time from Scout to analyser, thus helping to drive the commander's decision-making process, and aid in exercising economy of force, by positioning follow on forces where they are needed.

#### **Conclusion**

Scout training must be current, relevant, and realistic.

Scouts need not be doctrinaires. They need to be forward thinkers and problem solvers. They must possess a high level of independence and operate decisively. Scouts must develop a high level of basic skills and display the motivation and discipline to continually do the small things right. Once the requisite level of understanding of TTP's and attention to detail has been achieved, Scouts can then be afforded the level of autonomy required to operate in all aspects of ISTAR operations.

Modern Armoured Reconnaissance is about more than information on an adversary. It must inform the decision-making process on Terrain Characteristics, Route Reconnaissance, Friendly and Non-Friendly Obstacles to Movement, Human Terrain / Threat Analysis, Zone and Area Reconnaissance and Battle Damage Assessment. It incorporates both Information Fusion and the ability to collaborate and the effect of Direct Fire Weapons working in conjunction with other Arms and understand modern procedures for Recce Handover.

The "Cavalry Corp Strategy 2030" envisions the future, Modernisation and Development for the Cavalry Corp. Scouts augment this endeavour as Tech- Enabled, multi-skilled, highly disciplined and professional Reconnaissance Specialists

Carpe Diem.



Student conducting Ground Surveillance with FOXTRACK GSR

# AIR CORPS IN AID OF THE HSE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Article and Photos By Pte (AR) Lukasz Gancarz



PC-12

Baldonell Aerodrome, in operation since 1917, was a witness to the Air Corps history, from its foundation to today's operations. Tonight, amid global pandemic, Air Corps is providing much needed support to the Health Service Executive, not only with Helicopter Emergency Services provided by the Athlone based Air Corps 112 or Patient Transport Services, but also with the COVID-19 PCR test cargo flights, which are carried out from Ireland to Germany. The PCR missions are carried out on board of the Casa CN235-100 MPA, which is in service with the Corps since 1994. The main role of this aircraft are maritime patrols, however with its multirole designation, it can also complete tasks of a typical military transport unit. It can also provide a full Search and Rescue top cover, and work as a parachuting platform. Multiple test samples were carried out using the latest addition to the fleet, the Pilatus PC-12/47E. This state-of-the-art turboprop can carry a wide array of tasks, from logistics, medical transport, reconnaissance, and surveillance. Both aircraft carried 500,000 COVID test samples since the outburst of the pandemic in 2019. They can operate in all weather conditions and at any time;



EC135

however, most of these flights are carried out during the night.

Each mission usually consists of a crew of three as a minimum crew compliment: two pilots and a Load Master. Load Master is responsible for supervising the loading, fuelling, and unloading process and ensuring that the aircraft operates within its mass and balance limits. He also provides the flight deck crew with the mass and balance information, which is then required to calculate the performance of the aircraft in flight. While the engineers are preparing the aircraft for flight with the pre-departure checks, pilots are going through their flight briefing package. This is a set of paper and digital documentation, which includes all NOTAMs (Notice to air missions), weather brief (METAR, local and international), detailed routing information and all other sets of supporting documentation, which is required to carry out the mission. Only then, the crew makes its way to the aircraft, which is essentially ready for departure. Everything in aviation follows a very strict set of rules, including the flight deck preparation. While the flight crew checks all the safety equipment in the back of the aircraft, pilots have their own checklists to go through. There is an old saying in aviation business; behind every step of the checklist is human tragedy. At some stage, various omissions of important checks caused air disasters in the history of flight, therefore while one of the pilots is reading out a given point of a checklist, another pilot carries out the check, so that both crew members are constantly cross checking each other.

The CRM, or Crew Resource Management is by far, one of the most effective safety tools within the Air Corps and is being taught to the pilots from the very first day of their training. As per the definition set by the Federal Aviation Administration, CRM training focuses on situation awareness, communication skills, teamwork, task allocation and decision-making within a comprehensive framework of standard operating procedures. In simple words, it maintains a sound teamwork as the core of all flight deck and aircraft crew operations. For the No. 3 Operations Wing, this project was, and still is managed by Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Bonner, who until recently was the Commanding Officer of the helicopter unit of the Air Corps. The main idea behind it, was to involve every person working with the Air Corps responsible for the safety and performance of each task carried out within its capacities, from flight attendants, engineers, flight crews or janitor staff. There are several CRM Instructors within the IAC, who on regular basis oversee, train, and supervise the implementation of it. This covers all aspects of the mission from planning, preparation, execution, and post briefing. A very good example of CRM in use, is a common phrase for the Air Corps staff: "Three to go – one to say no". If one of the four crew members feels that the mission might not be safe either to weather factors or down to his personal wellbeing, he has a full right to say no to it.

The participation of the helicopter wing in supporting operations for the HSE is nothing less than critical. No 3 Operations Wing is capable of carrying out all types of missions in all weather conditions, from Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), patient transport, Search and Rescue (SAR) and top cover for emergency services on the ground. All



Bambi Bucket

Air Corps aircraft can be configured as a medical support ship, however the Leonardo AW139 truly stands out. We can call it a real Swiss army knife, capable of undertaking a full spectrum of missions from HEMS, firefighting, troop insertion or patient transport. Floor section of the aircraft is modified for carriage of not only the specialised stretcher unit, but most importantly an advanced neonatal unit.

In fact, probably the most vital task of the No. 3 Helicopter Wing is the provision of emergency medical services. In 2011 a 12-month pilot project was launched to test possible advantages of having a helicopter with a full crew on standby to provide daytime HEMS flying under visual flight rules. CRM was a defining element of the program, which Lt Col Bonner helped launch. One of the unique challenges at the beginning of joint operations was integrating two very different operational cultures.

Pilots and aircrew were using jargon unfamiliar to medical personnel, while paramedics were using medical terminology previously unheard by the aviators. Again, CRM training was modified to educate military staff on medical phraseology, including having one of the Air Corps crew members trained as a medical technician able to assist with casualty care. The same approach went toward the medical staff, who were introduced to the Air Corps procedures and operations, making them permanent members of the HEMS team. EAS flights were initially performed with an EC135 before the larger, more capable AW139 was brought online.

The service significantly reduced transit times for the patients and in 2013 became permanent. Another big step forward was to include the dispatcher's offices, which are located over 100 miles (160 kilometres) away from Athlone, by installing a set of cameras in the HEMS briefing room.



L139

This allowed the dispatcher to see and hear the pre- and post-action briefings, fully incorporating them into the advanced CRM system in place.

Sometimes, when more specialised assistance is needed – such as for neonatal care, the Air Corps' fixed-wing aircraft will scramble to help. With CASA CN-235 ready at Casement Aerodrome, a young patient can be immediately transferred and transported to an advanced care unit in the United Kingdom. And with full cooperation from all emergency services involved, the Athlone-based HEMS unit has proven itself to be a major addition to the Irish public.

With the addition of Pilatus PC-12, and soon Airbus C295, the Air Corps will have even greater capacities to assist the HSE. CASA became a part of Airbus corporation in year 2000, hence a small change of name. The PC-12 is a highly versatile aircraft, that can carry out the most demanding logistics issues, while requiring a minimum crew and handling. It can be prepared for flight in a very short time and carry out missions over 2500 kilometres away. This is going to be complemented by a superb quality of the new C295, which is going to bring more versatility, improved avionics and airframe, which provides 5% better fuel consumption. While C235 is an extremely universal medium range transport and patrol aircraft, C295 adds a new quality to a well-tested platform.

The final addition to the fleet, capable of carrying support tasks for the HSE is the Learjet 45. Initially designed as a medium range business jet, Learjets have seen military service since the Vietnam War era. Today, with the Air Corps, Learjet is used for Presidential, Ministerial and VIP transport duties. However, it can be quickly converted into a flying ambulance, equipped with Lifeport stretchers and life support systems, with an independent electrical, oxygen, vacuum and air source for the medical personnel taking care of the patient on board. Stretchers can be transported directly from an ambulance to an aircraft care bay thanks to a modified loading ramp.

The ability to quickly adapt to a new situation is a paramount in every military operation. It was especially critical during the past two years, when the Air Corps provided a constant aeromedical and logistics support to the State. With operations carried out at all weather conditions and at any time of day, crews are always ready to assist the HSE when needs arise.



Pc-12 preparing for take off

Explosion at Four Courts, 30th June 1922 (Courtesy of the South Dublin Libraries, from the T.J. Byrne Collection)



'The Block' - The east side of Sackville St. (Courtesy of Military Archives)



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# DUBLIN IN FLAMES 1922

BY: PAUL O'BRIEN MA  
PHOTOS: PHOTOS AS ACCREDITED

**O**n Wednesday 28th June 1922 one of the most recognisable buildings in Ireland, the Four Courts on Inns Quay in Dublin, was enveloped in a cloud of dust as artillery shells pounded into its edifice. The Irish Civil War had commenced.

As the War of Independence came to a close with the signing of a ceasefire in July 1921, Republican forces were divided in relation to ending the conflict. On 7th January 1922, following extensive peace negotiations, Dáil Éireann ratified the Anglo-Irish Treaty by 64 votes to 57. This action not only divided the Dáil but also divided the country.

Throughout the country armed groups of pro- and anti-Treaty forces occupied strategic positions. On 14th April 1922 anti-Treaty forces under the command of Rory O'Connor occupied the Four Courts and several other buildings in Dublin city and a tense standoff between pro- and anti-Treaty forces commenced.

Anti-Treaty forces hoped that their occupation of the courts would ignite a confrontation with British troops and thus unite the pro- and anti-Treaty forces but this never materialised. Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith came under increasing pressure from London to assert the new govern-

ment's authority in Dublin and remove those occupying the courts.

On 2nd June 1922, two men assassinated the former soldier and Unionist politician Sir Henry Wilson in London. Though it was stated that the men were acting on their own initiative, it was suspected that they were acting on orders from anti-Treaty forces. This action produced an ultimatum from the British government that they would attack anti-Treaty forces in the Four Courts unless the Free State government took action. In response Collins issued a final ultimatum to those occupying the courts. The three-armed parties involved had now reached a point of no return. Civil War was now inevitable.

Rory O'Connor deployed his men in a defensive role within the Four Courts. The complex had been well fortified, with Lewis machine-guns and rifles covering the main approaches to the building and a commandeered armoured car placed at the gates, its Vickers machine-gun covering any threat that might materialise. The armoured car could also be moved rapidly from point to point depending on the direction of the attack. Windows and doors had been barricaded and a number of improvised explosive

devices had been placed at possible entry points.

Outside the walls the newly established Free State Army included many ex-British Army soldiers, many of whom were Irishmen who, having served in British regiments during the First World War, had gained extensive expertise in tactics and the handling of weapons, giving the National Army a distinct technical advantage.

General Tom Ennis was placed in command of the Free State forces. A frontal assault against a fortified building would be costly but those within the courts had to be removed as a matter of urgency. General Ennis had the use of two 18-pounder field-guns borrowed from the British army. Which he placed under the command of General Emmet Dalton and Colonel Tony Lawlor. The plan was to bombard the occupants into submission and on 28th June at 0400hrs the bombardment commenced. Shelling was to continue for a number of days.

By Friday 30th June a fire was raging out of control in the headquarters block that also housed the records office. A huge explosion rocked the

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city as the office disintegrated into a cloud of dust. Whether a shell or a mine caused the explosion is not known. Smoke and debris littered the courts as the beleaguered garrison clung on, many of them hoping in vain for a relief column while some planned a breakout. As the shelling and machine-gun fire increased the position became untenable and the anti-Treaty headquarters staff that included Rory O'Connor and Liam Mellows decided to surrender. At 1600hrs on 30th June 1922, having held out for three days, the Four Courts garrison, consisting of 140 men, unconditionally surrendered to the Free State forces. Casualties consisted of three anti-Treaty forces killed and eight wounded. The Free State forces had seven killed and 70 wounded. However, the battle for Dublin was far from over.

As the battle raged at the Four Courts, other anti-Treaty units took up positions in and around Sackville St (now O'Connell St). Commandant Cathal Brugha, with an estimated 70 men and women, took command of what was to become known as 'The Block', a section of the city consisting of 14 buildings on the east side of Sackville Street that stretched from the corner of Cathedral St up to Findlater Place. Comprising four hotels and a number of smaller buildings, the Block had been turned into a fortress by means of mouse-holing (a technique that involved burrowing through internal walls to connect each position and not exposing one's men to enemy fire). Anti-Treaty commanders such as Eamon De Valera, Séan T O'Kelly and Austin Stack joined Brugha in the defence of the buildings.

As the battle for the Four Courts drew to a close, General Ennis turned his attention to the centre of the city and the task of removing the anti-Treaty forces from the Block. On Monday 3rd July at 0200hrs he moved his troops into position.

Fire-fights erupted between the rival factions as Free State forces attempted to gain a foothold. Free State armoured cars and personnel carriers careered onto the city's streets disgorging their cargo of troops. Machine-gun fire from the turrets of the armoured cars ripped along the frontage of the Block. A cordon was established around the centre of the city and by 0315hrs Free State forces had completed their enveloping movement.

Artillery was moved into position and the bombardment of the Block commenced. Small anti-Treaty units fought from each post within the Block and when their position became untenable they withdrew further into the labyrinth of tunnels that linked each building. At 2000hrs on Tuesday 4th July, Free State forces unleashed their final assault on the Block. Artillery fire, rifle fire, rifle grenades and machine-gun fire were directed on to the row of buildings. However, it wasn't until 1700hrs on Wednesday 5th July that the last Anti-Treaty stronghold, the Hamman Hotel, was in flames. The building burned fiercely as Commandant Brugha, realising his position was untenable, ordered his unit to surrender.

With his pistol drawn, Brugha calmly walked out the front door towards the waiting Free State troops. He was shot and seriously wounded, a bullet severing his femoral artery. Though he received immediate medical attention, he died two days later on July 7th in the Mater hospital. Cathal Brugha's death was just one of a long list of prominent figures that would, in the following months, lose their lives during the Civil War. Though the battle for Dublin had ended, the battle for Ireland had just begun.

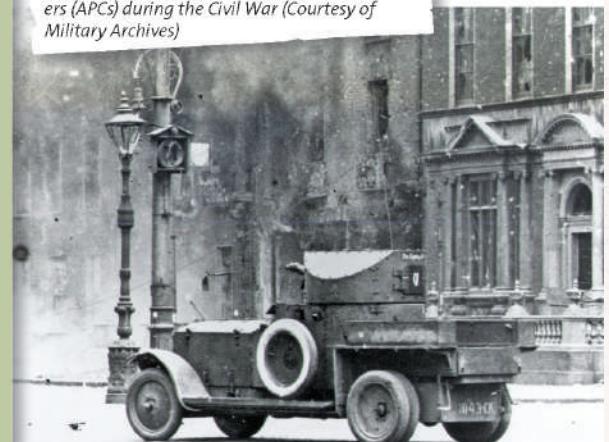
(Further recommended reading: 'The Fall of Dublin' by Liz Gillis - €11.69, Mercier Press, ISBN: 9781856356800)

*About the author: Paul O'Brien, who holds an MA in history, has published three books on 1916. His latest, Crossfire: The Battle of the Four Courts 1916, was reviewed in last month's magazine. Paul can be contacted at: [www.paulobrienauthor.ie](http://www.paulobrienauthor.ie)*

## STORY HISTORY HISTOR



Irish Free State Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) during the Civil War (Courtesy of Military Archives)



Four Courts c.1920, before the explosion of 30th June 1922 (Courtesy of the South Dublin Libraries, from the T.J. Byrne Collection)

## STORY HISTORY HISTOR



# INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

By Capt Austin Doyle of PR Branch  
Photos Provided by Capt Austin Doyle



DF Soccer vs UK Armed forces

Internal Communications Update is created by the Defence Forces Internal Communications Team. Our aim is to deliver accurate and timely information of interest to our members in order to increase awareness on current and future developments across the organisation.

Our segment in the An Cosantóir along with our online member's area on military.ie will allow information of interest to be distributed across the DF.

The Member's Area of military.ie is to enable our personnel to access information while off-site.

## JTF Update

### Op Fortitude

- Over 100 DF pers deployed weekly – over 123,000 to date so far.
- Average 10 pers deployed each day to 8 vaccination centres.
- 43 tents deployed to Gormanston Emergency Accommodation and Reception centre.
- Four (4) 20ft containers deployed to Citywest Emergency Accommodation centre.

**Op Fáilte** – DF support to receive and assist Ukrainians seeking protection in Ireland.

- DF continues to maintain Gormanston Emergency accommodation and reception centre.
- Kerry CC have requested the use of Ballymullen Bks for accommodation.
- 1,689 Pers deployed to date so far.



Cathal Brugha Barracks Centenary



DFTC Centenary



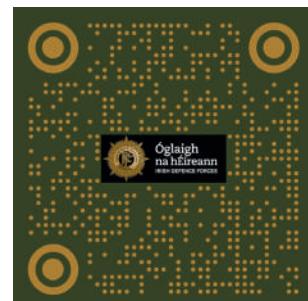
2 Cav Army Reserve

### Content on the Member's Area (MA) of Military.ie

The Member's Area of Military.ie has been updated with the information below. You will find the most up-to-date Internal Communication information on the Member's Area.

- Upcoming Events:
  - 10 Mile Road Race - 30th of June - Contact your unit PTI for entry details.
  - DF Adventure Race - 30th of June - Contact your unit PTI for entry details.
- OCSC Update.
- Mental Health survey for serving members.
- EOIs.
- DF Women's Network Newsletter.
- Photo Albums:
  - 2 Cav Army Reserve
  - DF Soccer Team vs UK Armed Forces
  - Centenary handovers:
    - Collins Barracks.
    - DFTC.
    - Cathal Brugha Barracks.
    - Sarsfield Barracks.
    - Casement Aerodrome.
  - Combined Joint European Exercise (CJEX) 2022.
  - 1916 Commemoration Ceremony
  - Outgoing state visit to Malta.

To view more information on all the above please go to The Member's Area of Military.ie. Scan the QR code to straight the Member's Area.



If there is Defence Forces Internal Messages you wish to have published here or on Military.ie please email

✉ [feedback@defenceforces.ie](mailto:feedback@defenceforces.ie)  
✉ [internalcomms@military.ie](mailto:internalcomms@military.ie)

# HEAD SPACE & TIMING

By Lt Col John Martin



In this issue I would like to talk about to you about suicide. I know that it is not an easy word for us to hear or to say and at some level, we have all encountered it in our lives. We may have lost a friend, a family member, or a colleague, or we may even have experienced thoughts of suicide ourselves in times of crisis. And I know that sometimes we need to allow time and space and the proper care and attention to heal us and to help us to recover from an experience of suicide, at whatever level.

So why then do we need to talk about it at all?

Why can't we just leave it alone and hope that it never affects us?

Well, all the research shows us, that being more open about suicide, being willing to talk about it to our friends, our work colleagues, and our family, can be important in a meaningful way, for people who are struggling to seek help and to stay safe. I have a simple objective over the next few paragraphs – I would like to introduce you to the conversation of suicide, and to show you some of the training that is available for all of us to help each other to stay well and to stay safe.

## **The National Office for Suicide Prevention and our national strategy:**

The National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) provides strategic leadership in Ireland in suicide prevention and is responsible for guiding the implementation of Connecting for Life, our national strategy for suicide awareness and prevention.

Through NOSP, the Defence Forces has been able to access key training activities in suicide prevention, which are outlined below. The courses are provided by an American company called LivingWorks, and each one is available to all of our citizens to complete.

## **The START programme:**

The START programme is an online resource that is easy to access. It is a simple interactive training programme that you can complete by yourself in the comfort of your own home. It aims to give you the knowledge and the skills to identify people who might be vulnerable to suicide and to intervene to keep them safe. START uses a mix of guided online content supported by video, and interactive questions and engagement. On average, you should be able to complete the training in about half an hour, but you are able to go as fast or as slow as you want.

## The SafeTALK programme:

SafeTALK is the most important widely used programme in the Defence Forces as part of the ongoing work of suicide awareness and prevention. It is a half day of training that prepares people to recognise when someone may be at risk of suicide and to have the confidence and the skills to intervene and get that person to safety. SafeTALK training is for everyone, and indeed the 'safe' part of SafeTALK stands for suicide alertness for everyone! It is ideal for people who volunteer, for teachers, or simply for anyone who comes in contact with others in the course of their daily lives. In the Defence Forces, SafeTALK training is delivered by PSS trainers and is available in all installations and on some overseas missions. Using a mixed media delivery, your trainer will help you to develop an understanding of just how important suicide awareness is. They will give you clear and useful information on how to support someone who is vulnerable to suicide, and they will bring you through the practical steps you can use to get someone to safety. You will also be given a clear idea of where the resources are within your community to help you.

## The ASIST programme:

ASIST is a two-day workshop that is conducted in a face-to-face setting by two qualified trainers. The workshop is well structured and resourced and uses a variety of training media, including audio-visual and video content, group discussions, roleplay and simulations. When you do ASIST, you will be taught how to prevent suicide by recognising when someone is at risk, how to provide a skilled and thoughtful intervention, and how to develop a safety plan to keep someone safe.

The three courses mentioned above, Start, SafeTALK and ASIST, can all be easily accessed. If you are a serving military person or family member, then please contact your local PSS team for details. Otherwise, you can contact the national office for suicide prevention (NOSP) at [www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie). These programmes are some of the best resources available but there are others. For instance, the OHANA zero suicide programme is a very good, simple and straightforward online course. You can access it at [www.ohana.ie](http://www.ohana.ie).

So, there you are – just a quick review of some of the courses and resources that are available to help you become better at spotting when someone may need your help, and to give you the confidence to be able to intervene and to get them that help. Remember, you don't have to be a professional to be able to offer support. You just need to be aware, and to be willing to do what you can.

If you have been affected by any of the information



provided above, then please make sure you are protected and cared for. If you are a serving military person or a member of a military family, you can contact your local PSS team, email [pss@military.ie](mailto:pss@military.ie) or access INSPIRE, our 24-hour confidential counselling service. The INSPIRE free-phone number is 1800 409-673, and personnel serving overseas can access the service using 00-353-1-685-6816.

Any of our readers can access support immediately by texting HELLO to 50808. Pieta House provides a 24-hour crisis hotline available at 1800-247-247. They also have a 24-hour text service for people in crisis which you can access by texting 51444. The Samaritans are also available 24 hours a day, for confidential, non-judgmental support at Freephone 116 123.

Suicide will always be present in our society, but by talking openly and by preparing ourselves with good training and education, we can reduce the risk, and support each other better through difficult times. It would be great if you could consider the training interventions mentioned and take the time to access the one which you feel is right for you. If you can, please discuss with a friend or colleague and see if they might be interested in attending the training with you. After all, the more of us who are aware, and who are confident enough to intervene, the safer we will all be.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article. For more information, please email [pss@military.ie](mailto:pss@military.ie)





## BOOKS

**Author:** Terence Dooley  
**Publisher:** Yale University Press (2022)  
**ISBN:** 978-0-300-26074-8  
**Pages:** 350  
**Price:** \$35

### **Burning the Big House: The Story of the Irish Country House in a Time of War and Revolution.**

In "The Big House of Ross-Drishane," written by Thomas Flanagan in 1966, he spoke of how the Great House or Manor House was simply known as the Big House and how it encapsulated a wealth of cultural history, and of the relationships of social classes over the course of several centuries. He reminisced how Roxborough, the family house of that great muse of the Irish literary revival, Lady Gregory, was burned during the Civil War and how nothing remains, save the sombre view foretold in a W.B. Yeats poem of "nettles waving upon a shapeless mound and saplings rooting amongst the broken stone." Publication of the "The Burning of the Big House," by Professor Terence Dooley of Maynooth University, is particularly timely, given the series of celebrations, often contentious, coalescing around the centenary of the Irish War of Independence period and subsequent Civil War, and within which the fate of the Big House was to be determined. In this engrossing, rigorously researched, yet accessible work, Dooley has put in context the fate of the Big House, many of which were destroyed amidst the crucible of violence and counter-violence perpetrated by all sides during the revolutionary period. Dooley fulfils the role of narrator, whereby "If the walls could speak" we are brought back in time to the daily lives of these beautifully designed and constructed houses that were architectural gems in themselves, on a par with the Great Houses that have been built in England. These houses were intimately intertwined with the course of Irish history, built by the Ascendancy Class during a time of disturbances, land acts and strained loyalties. The author writes how the majority of Protestant households tended to hire solely Protestant staff, which meant that for the local Catholic population, they remained a place apart and in a sense, an alien entity whereby local people had little or no contact with the owners.

Dooley argues that with the advent of the Land League in the 1880's, any bond that might have existed

was made even more tenuous. Equally important to understand, was that the series of Land Acts introduced by successive British and Irish governments that effectively unwound the Cromwellian Settlement, meant that without the vast acreage and associated income, many of the Big Houses would become financially untenable, irrespective of the burning of some 300 of these houses during the period of unrest, witnessed during the Revolutionary epoch. Some of these houses were architectural gems. Summerhill House in County Meath was known as the Versailles of Ireland, and Mitchelstown Castle was considered perhaps the finest house on the Island in both scale and design. Mitchelstown Castle had at least 60 principal and 20 minor rooms and where the entrance hall then swept into a 100ft gallery. Hence these houses which fell before the fire and storm of revolution, bared witness to the passing of a multi-generational social order, the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. Dooley has also exposed how the burning of the Big Houses during the revolutionary years was not always as straightforward as it might appear, and while ostensibly many of the burnings were associated with political upheaval, many of them equally coalesced around local agrarian disputes. There were mirrored in long standing local enmities and often petty hatreds, where the mantle of republicanism was a convenient cloak for many arsonists. After the creation of the Free State, the indifference of the Land Commission associated with exorbitant and illogical rates in the longer term, did even more damage to these houses than the deliberate burnings that were perpetrated. Bereft of income, many of the owners were forced to pull down the rooves of the house into irrevocable ruin and decay to avoid paying unsustainable penurious rates. This epoch in our cultural and architectural history, that was brought to life in the enormously popular works of Sommerville and Ross, such as "The World of the Irish RM," which juxtaposed the comic and the serious, capturing the dialect of the servants who ministered in the vast drafty houses of their 'betters', is now consigned to the shadows of history.

**Provided by Dr Rory Finegan**

# SOFQ FOXTROT - TWO

## SEPTEMBER 2022



For further information visit (web address and QR code). <https://www.military.ie/!YTO40>

